



The London Bridge Hotel

Standing in the shadow of The Shard, Western Europe's tallest building, is a hotel that was once a wartime telephone exchange.

As soon as you step inside it manages that alchemic task of instantly shutting out all the hustle and bustle of Southwark, London's financial district, an area undergoing regeneration.

The neighbourhood is filled with exciting museums and art galleries, gourmet restaurants and a theatrical heritage that dates back more than 400 years. Southwark also boasts some of the most spectacular architecture in the capital, and to take in a plethora of dramatic sights, it only requires an afternoon stroll along South Bank.

In theory, the London Bridge Hotel is quintessentially a contemporary art gallery, adding bold shots of colour to the common areas, displaying modern and sophisticated works of art created by artists who have connections to the area.

On weekends, the Quarter Bar doubles as a restaurant.

One key element which pre-dates the restoration is the parquet flooring which has been completely restored, lending a 'lived-in' feel to Quarter Bar. Here keynotes are the antique lead-crystal decanter lights sourced from antique markets and vintage stores, the sleek, long pewter

bar which is the room's focus, and the portrait gallery snug of London-born literary, political and artistic figures like Alec Guinness, David Bowie and Oscar Wilde.

Grey wall panelling, cornicing and picture rails complement the furnishings of burgundy reds and forest greens, creating a soothing air, highlighted with floor and wall lights. In fact, a lot of unusual low-level lighting is used to add warmth and intimacy to the space. Seating choices range from stand-alone tables with comfortable armchairs, window banquettes or bar stools.

There's an extensive classics cocktail menu, all of which have an added London Bridge twist, inspired by produce from the nearby Borough Market - one of the largest and oldest food markets in the city, which has recently reinvented itself offering a gourmet paradise with products from all over England and the Continent (open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays).

The London Bridge Hotel's kitchen and main dining room is closed on weekends, yet they manage to rustle up a few tasty meals from a small menu, which you take in the relaxed vibe of the Quarter Bar on the ground floor.

COMPETITION



Enter a competition draw and WIN A WEEKEND for two, plus dinner and cocktails, at the boutique LONDON BRIDGE HOTEL.

Question: What is the name of the London Bridge Hotel bar?

Email your answer, together with your name and phone number, to **competitions@aspect-county** be sure to include 'London Bridge Hotel' in the subject line.

The winner will be contacted by email before 1st October 2019.



Please see our privacy policy at www.aspect-county.co.uk

■ The captivating history of Southwark is a somewhat gruesome one, particularly in relation to Victorian times, as is evident from some of the local attractions that are currently close to the hotel such as the London Dungeon, Clink Prison and the Old Operating Theatre.

■ The area is also associated with Chaucer, Christopher Marlowe, Dickens, Dick Whittington and Shakespeare. Elizabethans flocked to the riverside to enjoy the plays by Shakespeare, performed at the Globe, which has now been rebuilt close to its original site.

■ Southwark stretches along much of the South Bank of the River Thames and is a thriving and vibrant place currently enjoying a new era of prosperity and growth. It's the location for several motion pictures, including *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

■ Borough Market is a wholesale and retail market hall quite literally one minute from the London Bridge Hotel. It's home to more than 100 gourmet stalls, offering a feast of hot dishes from street food vendors, heaps of fresh produce, international delicacies, handmade chocolate truffles, Indian street food and raclette.

■ It's one of the largest and oldest food markets in London and dates to the 12th century. It's best visited on Friday's and Saturday's. www.boroughmarket.org.uk



With chilled music and velvet seated booths it's easy to while the night away sampling the cocktails but venture out and explore some of the bars and pubs dotted around the Southwark area. The concierge is always ready with a host of advice on what to do in the area. Checking out my attire, he suggested a good jogging circuit around the local streets.

You're in for a good night sleep.

The 138 spacious doubles and executive king suites (all with hugely comfortable beds), are decked out in creams, browns and dark wood. It does exactly what you would expect of a four-star hotel but with some of its own touches - like American oak panelling.

The rooms either overlook London Bridge station or face south towards the Razor and Elephant & Castle. Bathrooms have showers and baths and White Company toiletries.

What is particularly eye-catching is, at the end of each corridor, bright modern wall art adding a splash of colour to what is a regular passageway.

There are also three 2-bedroomed luxury apartments, complete with a fully equipped kitchens and spacious living areas. AC

Weekend rates start at just £99 per room.

www.londonbridgehotel.com

Written and photographed by Cindy-Lou Dale

